



BUREAU OF NONPOINT POLLUTION CONTROL
DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Existing Sanitary Septic Systems General Permit ("T1") NJPDES-Discharge to Ground Water Permit No. NJ0130281

The Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution Control (BNPC) has issued a New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System - Discharge to Ground Water (NJPDES-DGW) general permit. The category of dischargers which can be authorized on a state-wide basis under this "T1" general permit are those which discharge sanitary wastewater to ground water from facilities using subsurface sewage disposal systems, i.e. "septic systems", whose aggregate daily design flow, determined in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:9A, is in excess of 2,000 gallons per day (GPD) per single property. These septic systems receive and treat sanitary sewage and dispose only sanitary wastewater. (*Note: Typical single family homeowner systems with a design flow of 2,000 gpd or less are not required to apply for this permit.*)

As a result of conversations with the regulated community, engineers, geologists and consultants, the BNPC decided these types of ground water discharges could be regulated more effectively using a general permitting regulatory approach. These discharges involve the same or substantially similar operations with respect to the nature of the discharge activity, discharge the same type of wastes and engage in similar disposal practices, require the same operating conditions and standards for disposal, require the same monitoring and/or inspections

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of the system as a first defense against threat to human health and the environment and, in the opinion of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are more appropriately controlled under a general permit than under separate, individual permits.

This general permit is advantageous to permittees, the Department and the environment. The general permit has enabled the Department to satisfy the regulatory permitting requirement for a large universe of ground water dischargers by issuing a significant number of authorizations enmasse.

The general permit is sensitive to permittees needs and was designed to be "user friendly". In addition, the general permit benefits the environment since it requires that the permittee immediately cease the discharge to any system found to be failing hydraulically and outlines the specific steps to correct/rehabilitate the malfunctioning system. The requirement that the operation of a septic system shall, at no time, create an unpermitted discharge to any surface water body specifically addresses nonpoint pollution concerns which

help to protect surface water quality.

Who Is Eligible?

This NJPDES-DGW general permit (NJ0130281) authorizes sanitary sewage discharged to ground water from existing facilities with existing subsurface sewage disposal systems (more commonly known as "septic systems"). Sanitary sewage is defined at N.J.A.C. 7:14A-1.2 and means "any liquid waste containing animal or vegetable matter in suspension or solution, or water carried wastes resulting from the discharge of water closets, laundry tubs, washing machines, sinks, dishwashers or any other source of water carried wastes of human origin or containing putrescible material." This term specifically excludes industrial, hazardous or toxic wastes and materials. However, this permit does allow for the responsible use and discharge of commonly used cleaning compounds that may enter the septic system.

Examples of septic systems which may qualify for this permit include septic tanks with seepage pits, disposal fields, or leach or tile fields (or an equivalent distribution mechanism); pit latrines; cesspools; dry wells; injection wells and infiltration galleries.

Facilities can qualify for and be authorized under this general permit upon demonstrating conformance with

the following criteria: 1) the septic systems were designed and approved in accordance with either N.J.A.C. 7:9A-1 *et seq.*, (Standards for Individual Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems) or its regulatory precursors; or by the NJPDES or Treatment Works Programs of the Department; and, 2) the septic systems were in conformance with the rules, regulations and ordinances in effect at the time of construction and construction was performed in conformance with a valid local or state issued approval. For facilities with existing individual NJPDES permits, the permittee must demonstrate compliance with the individual permit prior to being considered eligible for a T1 permit.

How Do You Apply?

The BNPC has developed an application checklist to assist you in completing a Request for Authorization (RFA) for the Existing Sanitary Septic Systems NJPDES-DGW General Permit (NJ0130281). The Checklist specifies the information required to be submitted to the Department as your RFA. The application package should include a completed NJPDES-1 Form, a USGS Topographic Map, and a facility plot plan. The complete application package (*one original and one copy*) should be sent to:

*New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection
Bureau of Permit Management
P.O. Box 029
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0029*

What Are The Permit requirements?

Facilities authorized under this permit will be required to develop an

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inspection schedule within ninety (90) days of the effective date of permit authorization. The inspection schedule must include, at minimum, monthly visual inspections of the disposal area and its immediate surroundings. The purpose is to proactively identify any evidence of malfunction or failure. The inspection should aid in assessing the overall system operation. Hydraulic failure or malfunctioning could manifest itself as wet spots, ponding or seepage on the ground surface. The general permit also requires that the most recent inspection schedule be kept on site, whenever possible, and that the facility maintain records of inspections and system maintenance for a minimum of five (5) years. In addition, all appropriate personnel must be educated as to the contents and procedures regarding the inspection schedule to ensure its proper implementation. A list of phone numbers to be utilized in the event of an emergency must be compiled and should be posted. Lastly, all septic tanks must be pumped at least once every five years.

If an inspection of the septic system reveals that maintenance is required to ensure continued proper operation, the general permit requires that the facility determine the corrective measure required within 48 hours and make the needed repair without delay.

If the inspection reveals that the disposal area is failing hydraulically, the permittee must immediately take corrective steps. These corrective actions include:

1) immediately cease discharge to the affected disposal area, 2) contact the BNPC, 3) determine the probable cause of hydraulic failure; and, 4) seek appropriate approval(s) for the corrective measures. The general permit will include forms which can be used for routine septic system inspections and for emergency procedures and phone list. However, the permittee may elect to use their own method of record-keeping as long as that allows the records to be properly maintained and assessed.

Any alteration or addition to your facility that may change the nature of the discharge, or any increase in its design volume, may be subject to stricter regulatory oversight by the Department. Any planned change, which may result in noncompliance with the permit, must be proposed to the Department for approval prior to implementation.

It is important to note that this is an overview of the general permit requirements and that a copy of the general permit should be referenced for detailed specific conditions.

How Do I Get More Information?

For specific questions concerning the Existing Sanitary Septic Systems General Permit (NJ0130281) you may contact the Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution Control at (609)292-0407 (mention "T-1") or write to:

*NJDEP
Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution
Control
P.O. Box 029
Trenton, NJ 08625-0029*